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A GENERAL VIEW OF GERMAN PEDAGOGY FOR THE BENEFIT OF FOREIGNERS. IV

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How is it—to return now to this point—with the model that is presented by foreign countries? What is really worthy of imitation, and what is it possible to imitate? In France as well as in England, secondary-school education is quite predominantly connected with boarding-school education, for which in our case only more isolated opportunities occur. The advantage that this offers of an essentially more uniform education, not divided between a number of co-existing authorities, is evident. There is also a large number of well-to-do families in towns, which from their outward and inward circumstances are not really able to provide educational facilities. Moreover the right educational attitude on the part of the teachers is most easily attained where they do not merely come into contact with their pupils in school hours, but spend the whole day with them. And accordingly, in different places in Germany, schools have lately arisen with a new spirit, located in a rural community, and with opportunities for manifold country occupations, for pupils and teachers to live and work together in a human and intimate relationship, and all this moreover, in principle, without abandoning serious aims in instruction. The name “Country-Home School” (*Landerziehungsheim*) has in itself a welcome sound. There are, for instance, some of these, founded by Dr. Lietz in Haubinda, Ilseburg, and Bieberstein. At the same time certain others with a somewhat different aim have grown up, such as the *Pedagogium* at Godesberg on the Rhine. Although these are all private undertakings, the state school authorities in Prussia have not of late closed their eyes to the necessity of encouraging so-called “alumnates,” and it seems probable that much more will shortly be done in this direction. It is true that

for the present this will still be only for the well-to-do, and that great care will have to be taken that more harm than good is not done by boarding-school life; in France, where boarding-schools are an old and universal institution, the most passionate protests are being raised against them by people whose opinions are entitled to respect.

The above-mentioned country boarding-schools are in essential points copied from certain English schools (those at Abbots-holme and Bedales); but it has been very usual with us for some decades to point to English education as a model in other respects also. What every authority upon the subject likes in this latter is the large amount of personal liberty granted to the individual, the training in self-reliance, the great opportunities for physical exercise and for games, which are by no means lacking in seriousness, the encouragement of sport, the self-government entrusted to the youthful community with the mutual education which it involves; and all in all we are very ready to agree, where English education is praised as essentially character-forming, while ours only aims at training the intellect (and moreover along too narrow paths). It is true in the last decades not a few of the games of young English people have been adopted by us, in so far as local conditions, opportunities, equipment, and the interest of the teachers, allow. That this should gradually increase we desire and hope. But the adoption of the good qualities of other countries is not so simple as one is inclined to believe. Such things depend upon long tradition and a deeply rooted way of feeling, and it is a good thing not to forget to preserve one's own national virtues, and if possible to intensify and purify them. It is just in the case of peoples of independent importance that an educational ideal cannot be exchanged like a military uniform or a type of vessel. We cannot help feeling the lack of many things in the English ideal. It is not merely that a very fragmentary intellectual culture cannot but seem to us something unworthy (for instance an ignorance of the history of other modern civilized countries, which does not cause any surprise in England, that we do not feel ourselves drawn to this either by carelessness or by con-

siderations of utility, but further, even the training of character which has been mentioned is not by any means such an entirely splendid thing. It may very easily turn to inconsiderate self-will (in so far as it is not balanced by an elevated social consciousness). And the spending of half (or more than half) one's youth in play not only presupposes considerable ease of circumstances but also in many cases gives rise to a slack conception of the duty of work in after life, a state of affairs to which English critics are continually bearing witness with regret. It would indeed be wonderful if the nations could mutually exchange their good qualities, thereby correct their failings, and nevertheless preserve their individuality. Perhaps much may be done in the future by good-will in this respect. That more independence, more individual freedom of movement should be granted to our elder pupils is recognized by all who are capable of forming an opinion, and not least by the supreme authorities also.

English education has one institution in common with French which only occurs quite exceptionally in German schools, namely, the public and ceremonies conferring of prizes and distinctions. It is true that this institution has quite another significance in France to that in England: in the former it is to a far greater extent entwined with the national character and the whole organization of life. It is not a mere chance that we Germans reject this. We dread lest ambition should become a force of decisive influence where duty—duty toward one's own personal ability and toward the community in which one is to live—ought to become the determining factor from an early age; and it displeases us still more that vanity should also have no small voice in the matter. Moreover the absolute degree of ability ought not to come into consideration at all, but only the degree of trouble taken by each individual, his earnestness, and his efforts. The *opus operatum* should have as little importance in education as in religion. And teachers should altogether be restrained from devoting their care to those who are most gifted, in order to "shine" by means of their pupils. All should have the same claim to educational care, at any rate all who are morally

worthy. It is indeed not to be denied that we have gone too far in paying attention to those of average abilities and have thereby often neglected the more talented ones; accordingly the proposal has recently been made to create special schools for those who are specially gifted. But serious objections may be raised to the realization of this, and one must try to attain this end by other means instead. Much greater prospects of success however attach to the idea of dropping the uniformity of the demands upon the elder pupils in all branches of the curriculum, and encouraging the choice of favorite subjects, involving a higher final standard of proficiency, but a reduction of the requirements in the other subjects. The Prussian school authorities have already been won over to this idea, and it will find further encouragement.

So far only English and French examples have been referred to, but with regard to another point it is especially North America that must be considered in the question namely, of the uniform and common education of the two sexes, coeducation. It may be said that opinion has become to a great extent favorable to it, and naturally it is more especially leaders in the general movement for the emancipation of women who exert themselves vigorously on its behalf. But apart from this, people are hardly anywhere inclined flatly to reject it, and every year sees the extension of the rights of girls and women to opportunities of education, which were formerly open only to the male sex. But it certainly goes step by step; and this, not merely because the weight of hostile tradition is greater in a country of old civilization than in the case of a young nation, but also because the belief in extreme standardizing from a single standpoint arises much more easily in the latter. Just as an elderly man is more cautious than a young one, so elderly nations may well be so too—may be so not merely because of their age but by reason of the greater circumspection which is possible in their case. And that an education of essentially equal *value*, but differentiated to suit the natural peculiarities of the sexes, would constitute a better solution of the question than simple similarity or identity, this view, once supported by our

noblest minds, will probably remain tenable now and in the future. But in any case the improvement of higher education for girls, in the sense both of making it less superficial and of bringing it into closer relation to the noblest problems of life, is in full progress, as will be shown by the plans shortly to be published for its reorganization in Prussia. Of course it is here only a question of the period between childhood proper and the age of real scientific study. Even for the future, it will hardly be impossible or prohibited that the ideal of woman, and so of woman's education, should undergo a certain modification at the hands of the particular nations.

With regard to the construction of the different branches of the curricula in general, there prevails no very fundamental diversity among the nations; a certain group of subjects is nowadays almost everywhere considered as indispensable. But beyond this there are wishes and protests enough with regard to particular questions. As is known, we have not clung so firmly to Greek as essential for university studies, as has hitherto been the case in England. But on the whole we are far from abandoning it with a light heart, or allowing it so little weight as has really long been customary in the Latin countries, and this in spite of the many individual voices which are raised demanding the ruling out of this language, or of the ancient languages altogether. Greater prospects of fulfilment exist in favor of the hope that the classical studies will be able to be pursued all the more intensively in the future by a limited number of pupils. Nothing of value can be expected from a superficial acquaintance with these languages. With us as elsewhere there has been in the last decades much racking of brains about the teaching of modern languages. One would fain see the rise of a real living ability to use them, and yet at the same time secure for this kind of instruction a greater educational value. The simple imposition by the officials of the "natural method" or *méthode maternelle* as in France, would be impossible in our case, in view of the caution and reserve of our authorities with respect to questions of personal method. It is left more to the individual to seek for the best compromise. To attach small value to a

fluent personal proficiency and to one that can be made of practical use, in comparison with painstaking understanding and wide knowledge, is, it is true, a fault that is widespread in Germany, or at all events among German teachers and *savants*. There is of course no standing still in the problems connected with the field of natural science. To make room for biology as a great independent branch of study, if necessary by the suppression of much else, is the most important tendency of the day. Hitherto however the majority of our science teachers have been inclined to attach biological knowledge to the various existing subdivisions of the whole subject. A further great desire is to give to geography a more scientific character, for school instruction also, and on the other hand to bring it into ever closer and more living relation to the history of humanity and of civilization. And so for mathematics, for history, for the mother-tongue, for singing, drawing, and other things, a variety of open questions present themselves, to describe all of which would lead us too far. Contrasting with the need which is felt of extending all these subjects, there stands the desire for a serious simplification of our curricula in general, for a limitation to a few branches of study, to be pursued quietly, collectedly, and with energy; the conviction that the present multifariousness only leads to a mutual neutralization of impressions. Perhaps in the future the reconciliation between these opposite aims will be sought in favoring more than hitherto the successive study of different subjects instead of the simultaneous attention to so many. But the difficulties will not disappear; they belong to the educational needs of the time.

There is still another subject in our school curricula which gives us difficulties that are not known in many (probably in most) other countries, namely religious instruction. With us indeed the demand is continually being made in a certain quarter, that it should be eliminated, so as to leave religious teaching and exhortation to the organs of the religious communities; but the overwhelming majority of school representatives themselves, authorities as well as teachers, would not regard this as an improvement. We wish that there should be an organic connec-

tion between all the subjects of education, more especially among the ideal ones, and that the purely concrete ("real") ones should be felt as parts of a system of education striving upward towards the ideal, and that the disparate should be harmonized by a kind of personal union. The Roman Catholic church has of course the further wish of maintaining a firm foothold within the public schools by means of its representatives. Moreover for its agents there are no such inner difficulties as present themselves extensively to the Protestant teachers of religion. Most of these have accepted the scientific view of religious matters in the spirit of modern theology, and yet they not only stand under a certain control on the part of the church and the more orthodox families, but, further, their educational consciousness itself in some cases demands something different from what is offered by critical theology. The process of further development will assuredly lead to the solution of these difficulties, but a long road with many inward and outward conflicts still lies before us. General (non-sectarian) instead of a definitely denominational religious teaching, or the introduction of a general religious elevation into the daily life of the school, such as seems to be realizable without difficulty in America, and such as was possible with us in the eighteenth century and on into the nineteenth, must unfortunately for the present be regarded as out of the question. The political antagonism of the creeds has too greatly accentuated their contrasts.

The relation which has just been touched upon between the educational and didactic problems leads to the question whether our system of instruction in fixed classes is to be preserved unconditionally for the future, or whether the pupils should not rather be formed into groups for the different subjects according to the degree of their proficiency therein. These would be, then, the English "sets" as opposed to the classes or "forms." A desire for this arrangement, which, in fact, was very common more than a hundred years ago, arises from time to time, for mathematics for instance, or French; but it has not yet been seriously considered.

Among writers upon the subject there is a fairly strong

trend of opinion against the examinations in our school-life, and especially against the test of proficiency (*Reife-Prüfung*) which terminates the nine years' attendance at the secondary schools. By some it is held that a report made out by the teachers, who know their pupils sufficiently well, would serve quite the same purpose, and if one thinks of the interests of instruction, one also regrets that it cannot continue freely up to the end, but must to a great extent exhaust itself at the last in repetitions, and focus itself upon the desired positive results of the examination. But above all one sees that the young people must exert themselves very greatly in the time before the examination, and one feels unbounded sympathy with them, which is however characteristic of the period and of the general condition of nervous life. In reality the demand for a temporary, if laborious, condensation of what has been learnt in the course of the instruction is one which can hardly be dispensed with, and also one which strengthens the character. German critics forget that the examinations in our schools are easier than they are in general abroad. For, after all, with us the teachers who have themselves given the instruction, examine, and their report upon the previous industry, achievements, and general behavior of the candidate has its full weight, so that chance is almost totally eliminated; quite otherwise therefore than in the neighboring civilized countries, just as our examinations are not competitive either, and it is by no means only those who happen to be the best who pass them.

Similar protests to those against the examinations are often raised by the public, with whom the doctors too are quite inclined to agree, against tasks to be done at home, just as if these were not a necessary complement of the school lessons; while it is only in them that the pupil has seriously to rely upon himself, since in the class lessons he is carried along by the stream, and, working with far less concentration, is deceived as to his own mental acquirement. Moreover this demand contradicts that other which is also often raised at present, that some real claim should be made upon the independent activity of the young people. But of contradictory wishes

there is no lack in our world of culture. It is true one cannot but perceive that the imposition of definite tasks is insufficient for the proper drawing out of independent activity, and just for that reason there is at present a tendency (as has already been pointed out) to introduce more freedom of study into the higher classes of secondary schools, by which means the violent contrast which at present exists between the excessive freedom of the university and the excessive constraint of the school days, is to be softened down. The tendency to this kind of emancipation connects itself, in fact, with that toward an increased freedom of movement for the teachers, and greater liberty of organization for the schools, which was spoken of in the introductory remarks. Not only has the regulation of higher education long gone to much greater length in France than with us, but it is at present more complete in Austria also, where the official "instructions" or "directions" (*Instruktionen oder Weisungen*) extend much farther into details.

No one has ever failed to remark that the most important means of securing the right sort of school-life is the training of teachers. Nevertheless this has long been very lightly regarded in the case of our secondary schools. The view that purely scientific university education is the only essential thing has held its ground stubbornly, continually supported, it is true, by great authorities; even now indeed it is not quite overcome. Most of those who embrace the profession of secondary teachers in our country still do so more from interest in their special subject; only a minority do so out of a liking for the molding and educating of youth. And that is indeed one of the reasons why the true educational attitude is, as has been mentioned before, so often wanting in the profession. The relative indifference toward questions of method, which in spite of all the methodistical pondering often enough exists in our country, has the same explanation. For those foreigners are quite right who (as, for instance, James E. Russell) declare in their visits to German schools they have met with many very indifferent teachers and who are in consequence disappointed, because they brought too favorable a prejudice with them. It is indeed very

dangerous for a nation to be in unduly good repute in a certain direction, but it is indeed always the case that the peoples see each other as too black or too white. In that they are like children, for whom there exists only good and bad men. Nevertheless for some fifteen years now very much greater attention has been paid to the training of teachers, and especially to that of teachers in secondary schools. At the same time the voices which demand the combination of the academic with the practical professional training have nevertheless remained greatly in the minority, and although the regulation varies in many respects in the different German states, yet on the whole it still remains a principle only to give opportunity or encouragement to an introduction to the theoretical problems of pedagogics during the time of study at the university, and to leave all the more detailed and technical questions for the period of practical training which follows the secondary teachers' examination (*Oberlehrerprüfung*). There does not seem any prospect that this course will be abandoned in the near future. On the other hand it must nevertheless be recognized that pedagogics are beginning to obtain a somewhat wider development at the universities, than they long had. Regular (*ordentliche*) professorships in the subjects have indeed as yet only been founded in Germany in quite isolated instances, and in general it is treated only as a branch of philosophy. The philosophical faculties are still struggling against the granting of further rights, and the relation will only change slowly, much as the numerous foreigners who visit us may wonder thereat. Nevertheless the change will be accomplished in connection with the need of the time for a fuller understanding of the development of childhood and youth, and from this fuller theoretical understanding there will follow a more serious treatment of a number of practical pedagogic problems which were hardly recognized as such, or were decided according to subjective feeling.

This domain of child-study, in which Germany, although it gave the first impetus, has yet only hesitatingly followed other countries (especially America), has the valuable indirect result of bringing together and uniting the teachers of the lower and

higher schools. A relation of mutual estrangement between the two must be admitted as a regrettable fact. The consciousness of a keener truly pedagogic interest in the one, and that of real scientific culture in the other, has hindered their mutual esteem. And, indeed, the elementary-school teachers have themselves more and more come to feel that the training they have obtained in the training-colleges is unsatisfactory, unsatisfactory in that it consists too much in the mere imparting of cut and dried knowledge, stimulates too little to independent research, and does not give sufficient insight into the problems of science. Their well-justified wishes are accordingly being more and more given effect to by means of reform of the training-college instruction. There is indeed scarcely any inclination on the part of the authorities with whom the decision lies, straightway to make them pass through the university; practical points of view are to be considered in the matter. The relation of the elementary to the secondary schools is not at present advancing, either, in the direction of that arrangement which is more especially desired by the former, and which is also wished for by many theoretical students of educational organization. Social-political, or perhaps more properly social-ethical, arguments may easily be adduced in favor of the arrangement that all the children of the nation should have to pass in common through the primary school, that the separation should only occur after a number of years, and that so far as possible only difference of ability should be considered in connection with this separation. But nevertheless definite, and not merely external considerations are opposed to it, and easily as such a thing may be realized in a country of new civilization, so fundamental a change of system would only be brought about in our circumstances with the greatest difficulty. But it is impossible to try to demonstrate this in more detail here.

In connection with this may also be mentioned a difference of some importance between Germany and other countries. It often causes surprise that the institution of kindergartens, which yet owe their origin to the German Fröbel, is much less general with us than elsewhere. Can this be indifference toward this

education which precedes the ordinary schools? Such an explanation would be by no means inconceivable, for in a country of long-established schools such as Germany, people are perhaps too much inclined to attach importance only to the regular schools. But other and better grounds can also be urged against the extensive use of kindergartens. The number of families who reject the trouble of the earliest education of their children and leave it to strange hands ought not to be greater than is rendered necessary by the social conditions. And the whole organization of games or of easy playlike learning during this period of life is by many regarded as of doubtful value, because restrictive of quiet self-development. But this is not the place to follow up this question either. We must also give up entirely the description of the great field of technical schools preparing for a particular profession (commercial, agricultural, building-trade's schools, etc.). It may be said, in brief, that their development is advancing, even if somewhat irregularly. More important, probably, than these is the "continuation" teaching to be taken on completion of the elementary-school course, by young people intending to become artisans, and for the children of the working-classes in general. In this connection it is to be remarked that this teaching for which opportunities were for a long time given without its being in the least compulsory, is now gradually being made obligatory; some of the smaller states and large towns of Germany have begun, and it will soon become general. Will this perhaps be regarded as a further step in the direction of an undesirable public guardianship, and subjection of free individuality? We wish for the arrangement in the interest of the still immature youths themselves, and in the face of easily comprehensible opposition on the part of all those who would like to make full use at once of their young powers of work, masters, employers, and uneducated fathers. At the same time the question as to the subject-matter of this "continuation" is no self-evident one, and recently quite new and valuable proposals have been made upon the subject by one of the principal educators in the town of Munich, Dr. Krichensteiner. The proposals fully deserve to become more widely known; and the

same gentleman is subjecting the subject-matter of the instruction in the national schools (*Volkschulen*) to an interesting reconstruction, with a tendency away from book-learning and toward immediate observation, accompanying activity, and individual understanding and judgment. These are aims which, especially to American readers of this paper, will seem neither strange nor unsympathetic.

And the same is certainly true of another province, which very decidedly belongs to education as a whole, even if scarcely any space or trouble was devoted to it until recently: I mean education, or aid in the education, of all who are pathologically afflicted, the feeble-minded, the neglected, those of stunted development, and those exposed to moral dangers, as well as those who have not the use of all their senses. The education of the latter indeed, the deaf and the dumb and the blind, has been cared for for a longer time, and need only be made more complete. But now a system of "auxiliary" schools (*Hilfsschulen*) and classes for the more or less feeble-minded is spreading itself over the country, and teachers of the best kind are devoting themselves to this task. The education of the children of morally depraved parents is provided for, in accordance with a law of the state, by lodging them with respectable families, and a great number of noble-minded men are aiding in this work; for the little ones there are "homes" (*Kinderhorte*), for those unfortunates who need strengthening there are "holiday colonies" (*Ferienkolonien*) and here and there also a "forest school" (*Waldschule*) instead of the town school, for the whole summer. The appointment of school physicians has become more and more general. There is much good will at work—whether more or less in Germany than elsewhere we will not attempt to determine. Towns, municipalities, the state, charitable societies, teachers, and educators share the tasks, which, altogether, are indeed endless, and which are continually increasing with the present development of social conditions. What field could be more inexhaustible than the problems connected with the education of the youth of a whole nation? Who will venture to say which nation does its duty most will-

ingly, or which, in spite of good intentions is left behind? We Germans have often received too much praise, and that easily changes into the opposite. To observe and compare is better than to praise and blame. In what I have said above I have tried to sketch a picture, the picture of our educational life such as it appears to me. He who sees more truly may correct me.